Kllisville State School



Ellisville, Mississippi 39437

Clyde Woodruff, Jr. Director

April 27, 1999

(601) 477-9384

Mr. Larry Blakeney, President Blakeney Communications, Inc. P.O. Box 64A Laurel, MS 39441

Dear Mr. Blakeney:

I would like to take this opportunity to endorse and give you my support for your plans to locate one of your radio stations in Ellisville, Mississippi.

When I came to Ellisville, Mississippi approximately fifteen years ago, it was a small town that did not appear to have that much economic activity. The perception that I originally had of Ellisville has changed dramatically, particularly during the last eight to ten years. Ellisville has become a small, growing community that is beginning to flex its economic muscle. I have been impressed with the number of people moving into the Ellisville area, and new businesses being established. In fact, my wife and I recently purchased a home in this area because we felt it was the growing and developing area of Jones County.

Ellisville is located approximately seven miles from Laurel and a little over twenty miles from Hattiesburg. Even though it is between two larger cities, it is separate and distinct from both Laurel and Hattiesburg. In fact, I believe that it is probably growing as fast as the Hattiesburg area and certainly much faster than the Laurel area that is located just a few miles up the road. I know from personal experience when I go to town to "shop", I go to Ellisville instead of driving a few miles up the road to Laurel.

Ellisville is also the home of two of Jones County's major institutions. One is the Jones County Junior College that serves over 4500 students each semester and is on the leading edge of educational innovation in Mississippi. Jones is known for a number of educational programs but it is well known for its technology programs. In fact, the Mississippi Legislature has just recently approved a technical training center to be funded and established in the Ellisville area. The other institution is of course Ellisville State School. Ellisville State School is the largest of the mental retardation facilities and serves 500 clients on campus and over 400 clients from our community

Mr. Larry Blakeney, President Blakeney Communications, Inc. April 27, 1999 Page 2

based service area which includes the counties surrounding Ellisville. We have approximately 1400 employees and 1100 of them work daily at Ellisville State School. Many of them live in the Ellisville area.

Ellisville also has a future. Plans are underway to implement a technology park in the area. If this is accomplished, then the growth potential of the Ellisville area is tremendous. It is my opinion that Ellisville can support a second radio station in the immediate area. Economic growth and residential growth dictate that media outlets such as an additional radio station would be a very viable and important tool useful in this growing community.

Sincerely,

yde Woodruff

Director

CW/dp



Western Auto Associate Store Vern Geddie, Inc.

119 Ivy Street • Ellisville, MS 39437 Phone (601) 477-3385

APPLIANCES • ELECTRONICS • AUTOMOTIVE • LAWN & GARDEN • FURNITURE

April 27, 1999

Mr. Larry Blakeney Blakeney Communications, Inc. P. O. Box 6408 Laurel, MS 39441

Dear Mr. Blakeney:

Thank you for inviting me to make a few comments regarding your proposal for another radio station to be licensed to Ellisville. My perspective is based on my experience and observations as owner and operator of the Western Auto Associate Store in downtown Ellisville for the past 30 years, from having served as Chairman of the Economic Development Authority of Jones County from 1989 to 1992 and again in 1997, from serving as member, deacon and chairman of the deacons at First Baptist Church of Ellisville, from having served as President of the Ellisville Lions Club and from having served on the advisory boards of Merchants and Manufacturers Bank of Ellisville and the Salvation Army over the years.

I was fascinated that you asked me to comment on Ellisville as an independent community separate from the Hattiesburg area. The fact is that Ellisville has a proud history as the economic and cultural center of Jones County for decades before Hattiesburg or Laurel even existed. There is probably no community in this region that is more independent or has a more distinct sense of identity than Ellisville.

For decades Ellisville had its own local newspaper and has had its own radio station since the mid 1970's. However, the newspaper is no longer published leaving the one local radio station as the only media in town. As a businessman, I would prefer to have another choice for advertising and news coverage.

Ellisville needs and can easily support a second radio station now. However, the projected growth of Ellisillve is going to multiply that need many times in the next ten years. The Technology Park and Advanced Technology Training Centers that have been authorized for Ellisville are already causing a great deal of activity in residential and retail development.

Experts project 10,000 to 15,000 new jobs for Ellisville in the next ten years. Approximately 5,000 of those jobs will be provided by Howard Computers, a new division of Howard Industries here in Jones County. Howard Industries is one of Mississippi's largest employers and is the largest privately held company in Mississippi. The Howards are totally committed to this Technology Park and, with \$400 Million in annual sales, they have the resources to make it

an extremely successful development.

Unofficially, economic development experts are predicting that within 10 to 15 years the population of Ellisville could swell to 20,000 or even 30,000 residents. We're already seeing real estate values increase three to five times what they were even a year ago.

In summary, we very much need and welcome another radio station licensed to Ellisville. There are exciting things happening in Ellisville. I know of developments underway that I cannot even comment on now that will make this need even stronger in the near future.

I would urge you and the Federal Communications Commission to take whatever steps are necessary to provide our community with this second staion. Competition is always good for everyone and we very much need a second source for news, information, sports and advertising.

If you need any additional information or letters from other folks here in Ellisville, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Vern Geddie

EXHIBIT 3



Small Business Development Center

ELLISVILLE, MISSISSIPPI 39437

April 21, 1999

Mr. Larry Blakeney P. O. Box 6408 Laurel, MS 39441

Dear Mr. Blakeney,

Your request for information concerning the Ellisville Trade Area is gladly accepted. The following information is the Jones Junior College Small Business Development Center reply to your request:

- 1. Request for confidentiality. We have a contract with our clients to maintain confidentiality. Some of the information provided below is highly confidential. Therefore, names are not given and these facts are not for publication. They specifically fulfill your request for information. The information is authentic.
- 2. **Promise of confidentiality**. We recognize the serious nature of confidentiality during the planning process, and will hold all information given and provided in the strictest form of confidentiality.
- 3. **Reference section**. Enclosed, you will find a list of resource materials used to produce the findings.
- 4. Ellisville independent community.
 - a. MDECD Web Site Our state organization for economic development shows Ellisville as a "community" choice for information gathering purposes. This means that they consider Ellisville as a trade area.
 - b. Jones County is one of two counties in Mississippi that have two county seats, Laurel and Ellisville. Jones County Residents will always vote to maintain this tradition.
 - c. Laurel is Masonite, Delco-Remy, Hub of the Oilfield Service Industry in the Southeastern U.S., etc. Ellisville is Jones County Junior College, Ellisville State School, the future of the "High Tech" industry, etc. In other words, Laurel is blue collar and Ellisville is white collar.
 - d. The JCJC SBDC covers five counties. One area of planning we cover with start-ups is target market. Eighty-two percent of our start-ups have been in Jones County. Jones County clients identified three target markets in FY98: (1) Laurel – 74 (2) Jones County – 59 (3) Ellisville – 51.

PHONE (601) 477-4165 FAX (601) 477-4166 e. Tradition - Ellisville has a loyal customer base. A significant number of Jones County residents prefer shopping in Downtown Ellisville to shopping in Laurel or Hattiesburg. Ellisville started a growth pattern three years ago (tax revenue and number of businesses with active permits). One new business is grossing \$30,000 + on a daily basis.

5. Ellisville - media needs.

- a. JCJC counseling of existing businesses desiring increased revenues. The most common mistake we find is "not enough advertising". We recommend spending to be in the 1.5% to 3.5% of gross revenue range.
- b. Ellisville merchant advertising counseling. The average advertising budget is .62% of gross revenues. The most common response to our recommendation is, "I have to advertise in both Laurel and Hattiesburg to cover our client base. People in those places just don't cater to Ellisville." I firmly believe that Ellisville Merchants would increase their advertising budgets if they could choose a local radio station.
- c. Ellisville frequency factor. The JCJC SBDC explains to clients that radio advertising's best effect is in changing frequency of client visits. Since the Ellisville client base has a high percentage of customer base that shops because of loyalty, it makes since that merchants would increase sales by advertising on a local radio station seen as loyal to the Ellisville community. A station with proven results would be even more attractive.

6. Ellisville - diverse viewpoints.

- a. See 5b & 5c.
- b. Ellisville customer base. Two major groups exist: (1) white collar, and (2) county traditionalists. This is a very different mix than for Laurel or Hattiesburg.

7. Ellisville – rapid growth potential.

- a. "High Tech" interest in Ellisville community. The industrial park has been idle for quite some time. The recent growth in interest is due to the high tech training options available at Jones Junior College. JCJC is one of the hubs for network computer training in the U.S., as well as providing plastics technology training. One of the computer technical degree programs currently has four PHD graduate students, and thirty-two graduate degree level students because of the demand for this unique training.
- b. Technology Park. Legislation was passed to open a 500-acre facility located less that one mile from JCJC. Interest in the park is not superficial.
- c. High Tech Training Center. Legislation was passed providing the first \$4 million for a JCJC training center to be located in the park. As much as \$12 million should be spent building the facility.
- d. Howard Industry. The first resident of the park will be the new Howard computer division. The Howard family goal is to place themselves in the

market at a level similar to Gateway and Dell. This is realistic because of the record of accomplishment proven by the Howard family. They are the largest manufacturer of transformers in the U.S. and are challenging for that distinction in the world.

e. Ellisville job market. The above facts project the creation of 10,000 to 15,000 jobs in the Ellisville community. It is not unrealistic that Ellisville's population will be larger than Laurel's population again.

f. JCJC SBDC clients. One client is planning a 3D animation facility that could collaborate with JCJC and Howard Industries. The facility would produce accident and crime scenes for courts and insurance companies based on know factors and calculated realities (one of several production realities they will market). We have had over twenty requests for land availability from clients planning on restaurants, motels, convenience stores, retail stores, cleaning stores, etc. We are helping another client produce business plans and Performa reports for financing the renovation of Ellisville's oldest downtown commercial building. It will be a combination restaurant, bed and breakfast, and antique store of high quality. Success is eminent because of the demand created by visitors to Ellisville State School and Jones County Junior College. Phoenix Technologies, Inc. is the manufacturer of the most effective system of solids removal from water systems in the nation. Their potential for growth is phenomenal.

8. Ellisville activities and news.

- a. JCJC Hosts area, state, regional, and national conferences for government organizations and educational institutions. The football team is the reigning national championship team. The softball team was the runner-ups in the Southeastern U.S. tournament last year. Also, baseball, basketball, soccer and tennis provide highly competitive teams.
- b. South Jones High School. Currently, no one covers football games for the team that has frequently been in the state top ten. Ellisville merchants would be easy to find as sponsors for broadcasts.
- c. JCJC SBDC. Public service announcements are required in order for workshops and seminars to given. A radio station based in Ellisville would improve attendance.
- d. City of Ellisville. The city would have a local venue for public announcements and political forums.

9. Ellisville political discourse and unmet needs.

(Included in previous remarks.)

It is my belief that the timing of business decisions is extremely important. Moving a radio station to Ellisville right now is an excellent choice of timing. Getting in on the ground floor of growth in Ellisville provides our community a definite option to increase sales dollars, participation in governmental functions and educational opportunities.

The Mississippi Small Business Development Center at Jones County Junior College gladly helps existing and potential businesses prepare for the future. We thank you for using our services.

Yours truly,

Gary A. Suddith

Director, JCJC SBDC

Lary a. Suddit

References:

- 1. MDECD Web Site "Community Profile": www.mississippi.org/ecd/comm/prof/comm_profile.htm
- 2. Mississippi Resource Center Home Page: www.mrconline.gov
- 3. Urban Decision Systems, P.O. Box 25953, Los Angeles, CA 90025
- 4. "A Need And Advisability Study On Workforce Development" As authorized by House Bill 1451, Mississippi State Legislature, 1997 Legislative Session by Dr. William McHenry, Assistant Commissioner of Academic Affairs, Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning, 3825 Ridgewood Road, Jackson, Mississippi
- 5. Mississippi Employment Security Commission
- 6. "Factsheet For Advanced Technology", Dr. Catherine Cotten, VP Information and Technology Department, Jones Junior College, Ellisville, MS
- 7. The Sourcebook Of County Demographics, 7th Edition, CACI Marketing Systems
- 8. State Institutions of Higher Learning, Total Headcount Enrollment Report, Fall 1993; Mississippi Association of Independent Colleges; State Board for Community and Junior Colleges.
- Annual Report Of The State Superintendent Of Public Education, 1998,
 Mississippi Department of Education, Jackson, Mississippi, Richard A. Boyd,
 Interim State Superintendent
- 10. "Checklist For New Manufacturers In Mississippi"; Existing Business and Industry Division, MDCED, Jackson, Mississippi
- 11. "Available Site Inventory Listing"; Industry Resource Bureau, MDECD, Jackson, Mississippi
- 12. "Labor Market Data", October 1997; Prepared by Labor Market Information Department, Mississippi Employment Security Commission, P.O. Box 1699, Jackson, Mississippi
- 13. "Mississippi Population Projections For 1995, 2000, and 2005"; Center for Policy and Planning, Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning, 3825 Ridgewood Road, Jackson, MS 39211
- 14. JCJC SBDC 1997 & 1998 Economic Impact Reports, Jones County Junior College, 900 Court Street, Ellisville, MS 39437

\$13.68/hour

ELLISVILLE, MISSISSIPPI

Prepared by the Mississippi Department of Economic and Community Development (601) 359-3593 April 20, 1999

POPULATION

Population:

1 opulation.	1990	1996	1997	2000	2005
Ellisville	3,634	3,749	NA	NA	NA
Jones County	62,031	63,447	63,419	64,755	66,997

Most populated cities in Jones County:

City	1996 Population
Laurel	18,586
Ellisville	3,749
Sandersville	883
Soso	375

Age breakdown of county population, 1997:

0 to 17	26%
18 to 44	38%
45 to 64	21%
65 and over	14%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, Census of Population, 1980 and 1990; United States Bureau of the Census, September 1998.

LOCATION

Distance to selected cities from Ellisville:

Area	Distance				
Atlanta, Georgia	371 miles	598 kilometers			
Chicago, Illinois	816 miles	1,316 kilometers			
Dallas, Texas	473 miles	763 kilometers			
Jackson, Mississippi	91 miles	147 kilometers			
Memphis, Tennessee	286 miles	461 kilometers			
New Orleans, Louisiana	143 miles	231 kilometers			

Source: Official Mississippi Highway Map; unpublished data collected by MDECD.

LABOR UNIONS

Information on labor union activity in Mississippi can be obtained by calling MDECD at 601-359-3449.

WAGES

Average wage rates*, 1997:

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17 M 64		acv	41 III	-

United States

Jones County	\$484/week	\$12.10/hour
Mississippi	\$492/week	\$12.30/hour
United States	\$737/week	\$18.43/hour
Services		
Services Jones County	\$422/week	\$10.55/hour

^{*}All rates include management personnel.

Source: Mississippi Employment Security Commission, Covered Wages and Employment for 1997; U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Annual Averages, 1997.

\$547/week

LABOR FORCE

Annual Average, 1997:	Jones County	Commuting Area*
Labor Force	30,350	108,130
Male Percentage	55%	
Female Percentage	45%	
Total Employment	29,270	103,140
Manufacturing	6,920	
Services & Misc.	3,840	
Total Unemployed	1,080	4,990
Unemployment Rate	3.6%	4.6%
U.S.	4.9%	
Mississippi	5.7%	

12 Month Moving Average, January 1999:

Labor Force	31,780
Total Employment	31,050
Total Unemployed	730
Unemployment Rate	2.3%
Active Applicants	1,795

^{*}Commuting area includes all contiguous counties.

Source: Mississippi Employment Security Commission, January 1999 and Annual Averages for 1997; Employment information from neighboring states, Annual Averages for 1997.

RETAIL SALES

Gross Retail Sales (in millions):

	1990		1993		1995	1998	
Ellisville	\$	19	\$	22	\$	24	\$ 33
Jones County	\$	524	\$	537	\$	619	\$ 778

State Tax Commission, Annual Report, Years Ending December Source: 1990-1998.

INCOME

Per Capita Personal Income:

1996 1992 1993 1994 1995 \$14,433 \$15,120 \$16,137 \$17,164 \$18,281 Jones County

Sources of Earnings by Place of Work, 1996:

Jones County:

26.7% Manufacturing Services 14.6% 3.5% Wholesale Trade 9.0% Retail Trade 18.2% Government

U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, 1998. Source:

ASSESSED VALUE

Grand Total Ad Valorem Assessment (in millions):

1995 1996 1994 Jones County \$ 208 \$ 218 \$ 235 \$ 255 \$ 268

Mississippi State Tax Commission, 1994 through 1998. Source:

FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

1 Banks based in Ellisville Banks with branches in Ellisville

Source: Department of Banking and Consumer Finance, 1998.

EDUCATION

For detailed information on education in Ellisville and Mississippi, request an Education Profile. Education Profiles are prepared for all Mississippi counties and may be obtained by calling 601-359-3593.

TRANSPORTATION

Highways in Ellisville:

MS 15, MS 29, MS 588, MS 590

US 11 I-59

Railroads in Ellisville:

Norfolk Southern

Air Travel in Ellisville:

Nearest Commercial Airport and its location:

Hattiesburg-Laurel Regional, Moselle

Distance (miles)

10

Length of runway

6,500 feet/1,982 meters

Number of daily outgoing flights

3

Major airlines serving the airport:

Northwest Airlink

Nearest general aviation airport and its location:

Hesler Noble Field, Laurel

Distance (miles)

5

16

Length of runway

5.512 feet/1,680 meters

Common carriers operating in Ellisville Ellisville's nearest full-service port:

Port of Gulfport

Post Office Box 40 Gulfport, MS 39502

601-865-4300

Distance from Ellisville

100 miles/161 kilometers

Name of waterway

Gulf of Mexico

Channel depth

36 feet/11 meters

Mississippi Department of Transportation; Mississippi Port Authorities; unpublished data collected by MDECD.

HEALTH CARE

Hospitals in Jones County

1

Number of beds

285

Source: Mississippi Department of Health, 1998.

UTILITIES AND SERVICES

Electricity distributor(s) in Ellisville:

Mississippi Power Company, Dixie EPA

Water/sewage service in Ellisville:

Utility name City of Ellisville Source Well System capacity 1,584,000 gallons per day 6,000 kiloliters per day 220,000 gallons per day Average consumption 833 kiloliters per day Peak consumption 300,000 gallons per day 1,136 kiloliters per day 500,000 gallons Storage capacity 1,894 kiloliter 970,000 gallons Sanitary sewer capacity 3,674 kiloliter Sewer treatment type Lagoons Percent of community served 100 64% Present load

Natural gas distributor(s) in Ellisville:

Entex

Source: Unpublished data collected by MDECD.

COUNTY FEATURES

County Seat(s) Laurel, Ellisville

Land area 695 square miles/1,800 square kilometers

County land area in commercial forests 66%

National Parks/Historic Landmarks:

DeSoto National Forest

State Parks:

None

Tourism related information Call 1-800-WARMEST

Source: Mississippi Elected Officials Directory; Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning; unpublished data collected by

FIRE INSURANCE RATING

Ellisville Class 7

Source: Mississippi State Rating Bureau, 1998.

COST OF HOUSING

Average Selling Price of Homes, 1998:

MAR, Laurel area \$73,573 Mississippi \$92,303

Source: Mississippi Association of Realtors (MAR) and/or Warren County Realtors Association, 1999.

PROPERTY TAX

Average county millage

99.95

Property tax- Counties and municipalities levy a property tax on real and personal tangible property. Most property is assessed at 15% of true value. Motor vehicles and utilities (excluding railroads) are assessed at 30% and owner-occupied residential properties are assessed at 10% of true value.

To calculate annual property tax:

 $Tax = (V \times A \times M) / 1000$

V = property value (\$), A = assessment percentage (%),

M = millage rate

Example: Home value \$73,573 millage rate 99.95 ($$73,573 \times 10\% \times 99.95$) / 1,000 = \$735.36

Source: Mississippi State Tax Commission, 1999.

CONSTRUCTION COSTS

R.S. Means Construction Cost Data Indexes are available for

ten Mississippi locations:ResidentialCommercialBiloxi0.850.81Clarksdale0.710.68Columbus0.720.73

Greenville 0.79 0.83 Greenwood 0.73 0.70 Jackson 0.830.79 Laurel 0.74 0.70 McComb 0.70 0.68 0.77 Meridian 0.78 0.72 0.73 Tupelo 1.00 United States Average 1.00

Source: R.S. Means Company, Inc., Square Foot Cost Book, Location Factors for Mississippi, 1998.

LARGEST MANUFACTURERS IN JONES COUNTY

Manufacturing	Employees	Type of Business
Howard Industries, Inc.	2,800	Electronic and other electrical equipment and components, except computer equipment
Wayne Farms	1,200	Food and kindred products
Masonite Corp.	971	Lumber and wood products, except furniture
Howard Industries, Inc.	640	Electronic and other electrical equipment and components, except computer equipment
Sanderson Farms, Inc.	600	Food and kindred products

Source: Mississippi Manufacturers Directory, April 1999.

EXHIBIT 4

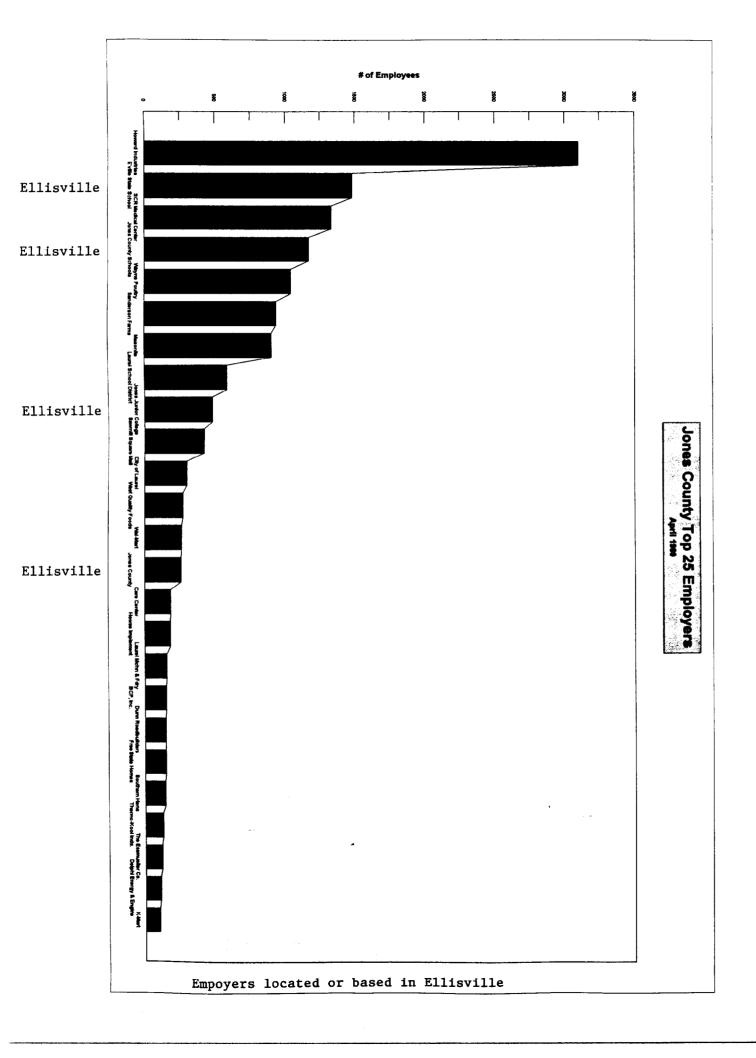
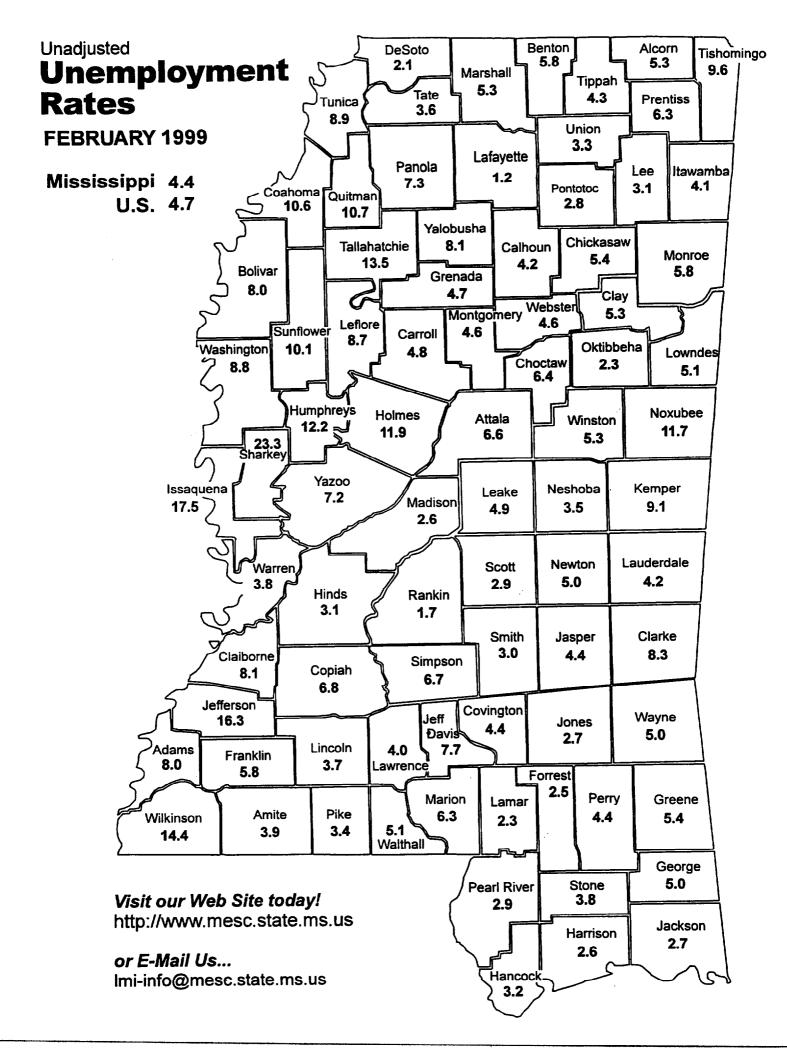


EXHIBIT 5



UNEMPLOYMENT RATES

FEBRUARY 1999

(County Rankings)

		_	
1 Lafayette	1.2		.1
2 Rankin	1.7		.1
3 DeSoto	2.1		.3
4 Oktibbeha	2.3	45 Marshall 5	.3
5 Lamar	2.3		.3
6 Forrest	2.5		.3
7 Madison	2.6	48 Chickasaw 5	.4
8 Harrison	2.6	49 Greene 5	.4
9 Jones	2.7	50 Benton 5	.8
10 Jackson	2.7	51 Franklin 5	.8
11 Pontotoc	2.8	52 Monroe 5	.8
12 Scott	2.9	53 Prentiss 6	.3
13 Pearl River	2.9	54 Marion 6	.3
14 Smith	3.0	55 Choctaw 6	.4
15 Hinds	3.1	56 Attala 6	.6
16 Lee	3.1	57 Simpson 6	.7
17 Hancock	3.2	58 Copiah 6	.8
18 Union	3.3	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	.2
19 Pike	3.4	60 Panola 7	.3
20 Neshoba	3.5	61 Jeff Davis 7	.7
21 Tate	3.6	62 Bolivar 8	.0
22 Lincoln	3.7		.0
23 Stone	3.8		.1
24 Warren	3.8		.1
25 Amite	3.9	66 Clarke 8	.3
26 Lawrence	4.0		.7
27 Itawamba	4.1		.8
28 Calhoun	4.2	_	.9
29 Lauderdale	4.2	70 Kemper 9	.1
30 Tippah	4.3	71 Tishomingo 9	.6
31 Covington	4.4	72 Sunflower 10	
32 Jasper	4.4	73 Coahoma 10	
33 Perry	4.4	74 Quitman 10	
34 Montgomery	4.6	75 Noxubee 11	.7
35 Webster	4.6	76 Holmes 11	
36 Grenada	4.7	77 Humphreys 12	
37 Carroll	4.8	78 Tallahatchie 13	.5
38 Leake	4.9	79 Wilkinson 14	.4
39 Wayne	5.0	80 Jefferson 16	
40 George	5.0	81 Issaguena 17	
41 Newton	5.0	82 Sharkey 23	
		,	

LABOR FORCE AND EMPLOYMENT SECURITY DATA

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

LABOR FORCE DATA	February 1999*	January 1999	One Year Ago	1998 Annual Average	Moving** Average
Civilian Labor Force	1,273,500	1,281,200	1,257,700	1,268,700	1,272,500
Unemployed	55,400	74,100	70,800	68,300	66,800
Unemployed Rate (Unadjusted)	4.4	5.8	5.6	5.4	5.2
Unemployed Rate (Adjusted)	4.3	5.2	5.5	xxx	xxx
Employed	1,218,100	1,207,100	1,186,900	1,200,400	1,205,700
	UNITE	D STATES			
LABOR FORCE DATA	February 1999*	January 1999	One Year Ago	1998 Annual Average	Moving** Average
Civilian Labor Force	138,202,000	137,943,000	136,286,000	137,673,000	137,999,000
Unemployed	6,563,000	6,604,000	6,804,000	6,210,000	6,151,000
Unemployed Rate (Unadjusted)	4.7	4.8	5.0	4.5	4.5
Unemployed Rate (Adjusted)	4.4	4.3	4.6	xxx	xxx
Employed	131,639,000	131,339,000	129,482,000	131,464,000	131,848,000
EMPLOYMENT SECURITY DATA	February 1999*		One Month Ago		One Year Ago
Initial UI Claims	10,942		19,483		11,457
Continued Claims	83,859		96,636		83,975
New Applications	10,359		12,637		12,151
Total Counselling Interviews	730		722		705
Individual Counseling Interviews	609		618		594
Total Placements	5,886		4,948		5,716
Nonagricultural	5,880		4,942		5,709
Agricultural	6		6		7
Job Development Contacts	2,648		3,178		2,842
Placements from Job Developments	176		215		241

^{*}Preliminary

^{**} Average for most recent twelve months, including current month

news release

MISSISSIPPI EMPLOYMENT SECURITY COMMISSION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE MARCH 29, 1999

CONTACT: JAN D. GARRICK (601) 961-7483

JOB GROWTH CAUSES FEBRUARY RATE TO DROP

JACKSON---The state's unemployment rate dropped in February behind job growth in several sectors of the workforce, the Mississippi Employment Security Commission (MESC) announced Monday.

The rate dropped to 4.4 percent for February from a January rate of 5.8 percent as job gains were posted in the construction, trade, education and services industries.

Wholesale and retail trade added 2,300 jobs for the month while 1,400 more people were working in the services industries. State and local education added 1,200 jobs during the month while construction saw 500 jobs added. Statewide 1,218,100 Mississippians were employed in February.

The state's unemployment rate of 4.4 percent was very near the national rate of 4.7 percent for February.

Most counties across the state showed improvements in their rates, according to MESC Executive Director Thomas E. Lord. "Thirty-three counties matched or bettered the statewide rate of 4.4 percent," Lord said.

Lafayette County again had the state's lowest rate at 1.2 percent followed by Rankin County at 1.7 percent and DeSoto County at 2.1 percent. At the other end of the rankings, Sharkey County recorded the state's highest rate at 23.3 percent. Even with the highest rate, Shakey's numbers were down from last month when the rate was 29.7 percent.

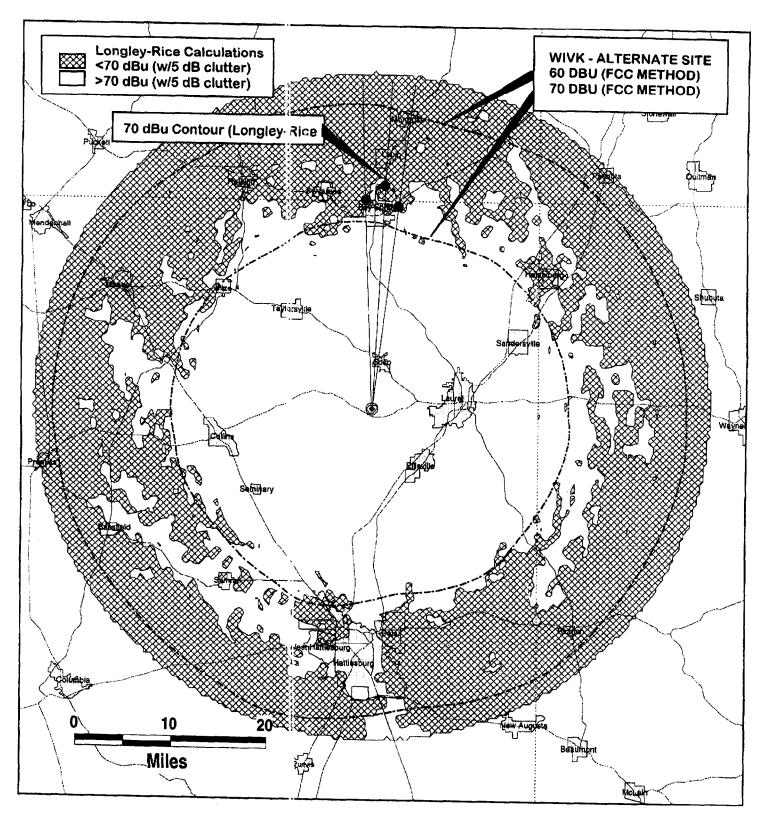
Lord said that spring usually brings further improvements in labor force conditions.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: ALL MESC NEWS RELEASES ARE AVAILABLE
AT THE MESC WEB SITE: http://www.mesc.state.ms.us

EXHIBIT 6

FIGURE 1



OVERAGE ANALYSIS WIVK - ALTERNATE SITE 2

du Treil, Lundin & Rackley, Inc. Sarasota, Florida

EXHIBIT 7

HATTIESBURG MSA/JONES COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI LABOR MARKET ANALYSIS

prepared for:

THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF JONES COUNTY JUNE 1998

prepared by:

THE WADLEY-DONOVAN GROUP, LTD. 973.540.0012

WDG had a response rate of almost 27% to its survey (See Table 1). This rate is consistent with those received in labor market studies conducted by WDG in similar sized study areas.

TABLE 1
SUMMARY OF EMPLOYER SURVEY RESPONSE

	Hattiesburg MSA	Jones County	Total
Surveys Mailed	133	59	192
Surveys Received	28	23	51
Response Rate	21.1%	39.0%	26.6%

WDG supplemented these surveys with 24 on-site interviews with local employers, educators, government officials, and others familiar with labor market conditions in the three county area. The survey results discussed in this report include data gathered from both WDG's on-site interviews and mail survey. Through the interviews and survey, WDG gathered information from 75 local companies and non-employers for this report.

This report presents WDG's findings on the study area's labor market in six sections: Labor Market Area Definition, Labor Market Profile, Labor Availability, Labor Quality, Labor Cost, and Operating Environment. This document also contains an Executive Summary and an appendix summarizing the results of WDG's employer interviews and surveys. A separate appendix containing detailed demographic and regulatory data relevant to the study is provided separately on diskette. Data is provided for each of the three counties, the Hattiesburg MSA, the State of Mississippi, and the US. Data is also provided for three commute zones that were calculated for this project.

A study of this nature can do no more than describe local conditions. The actual impact of those conditions for any given corporate activity will vary, reflecting the different characteristics and structure of each specific organization. The findings presented herein are those of The Wadley-Donovan Group only.

WDG is an independent management-consulting firm recognized internationally as one of the leading authorities in the field of corporate location and relocation. Clients have included American Express, Toys R Us, US Airways, British Air, Salomon Brothers, Swiss Bank, Sony, Dun and Bradstreet, and over 300 others. As an outgrowth of this corporate consulting, WDG is frequently asked by economic development agencies and utilities to assist them with their economic development programs. Assistance is typically provided in sales and marketing, strategic planning, database development, overall product development, and assessment. Clients have included New Orleans; Tulsa; Orange County and Orlando, FL; Memphis; Phoenix; Asheville, NC; Raleigh; Kansas City; Richmond, VA; Jackson, TN; Mobile; and the states of Delaware, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, and Washington.

INTRODUCTION

This report assesses the labor market of Forrest, Lamar, and Jones Counties, Mississippi, for office and industrial enterprises. The major objectives of this report are to:

- Evaluate current and future labor market conditions from the perspective of a corporate site seeker.
- Assess the current state of labor availability, quality, and cost.
- Describe the commuting patterns of workers in the three county area.
- Determine the extent of underemployment in the labor force.
- Identify issues of concern to local employers.
- Provide a baseline for future labor market analyses.

This analysis is the product of a contract between the Wadley-Donovan Group (WDG), the Area Development Partnership (ADP) representing Forrest and Lamar Counties, and the Economic Development Authority (EDA) of Jones County. The ADP and EDA of Jones County jointly retained WDG for this analysis for two reasons. First, the Hattiesburg MSA and Jones County border one another and are connected by an interstate highway, and because of this highway linkage it was thought that the two regions are functionally portions of one labor market. Second, a joint effort allowed for economies of scale. By joining together, the ADP and EDA of Jones County were able to have WDG undertake a much more comprehensive analysis than would have been otherwise possible.

Although a single report has been written, separate versions have been prepared for each of the two organizations. The body of both reports are identical. The executive summary of each report varies, however. Each summary is focused on WDG's findings, conclusions and recommendations for remedial action for the area served by each of the two organizations. The executive summary of this report addresses conditions in Jones County.

WDG analyzed data provided by both the ADP and the EDA of Jones County, published data sources, and WDG's proprietary databases. In addition, WDG conducted a mail survey of nearly 200 employers in Forrest, Lamar, and Jones Counties. These employers consisted of private and public agencies with 50 or more employees. Survey respondents included employers in every major business, service, and government category.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Findings

The Jones County labor market is confined largely to the county. WDG's commute zone maps indicate that only small areas of surrounding counties are within a 30 minute commute from the principal area of employment in Jones County. Surprisingly, despite direct interstate access, there is very limited labor exchange between Jones County and the Hattiesburg MSA.

The employment profile of Jones County is sharply different from the national average. Most importantly, Jones County maintains an extremely high concentration of manufacturing employment. Nearly one-third of all jobs in the county are in the manufacturing sector, compared with less than 20% for the nation as a whole.

Manufacturing employment in Jones County is highly concentrated within a few large firms that enjoy established reputations as excellent employers. Large manufacturing operations new to Jones County will experience very strong competition for labor unless they are willing to offer compensation packages and create working environments which are better than those of the county's largest and most attractive manufacturing operations.

Jones County is underrepresented in finance, insurance, and real estate (FIRE) employment. Only 3% of the county's jobs are in the FIRE sector, compared with 7% in the US. Similarly, the concentration of service employment in the county is far lower than in the nation as a whole (30% versus 35%). As will be discussed in the recommendations section of the executive summary, companies in these business sectors are ideal targets for Jones County's future development efforts.

Employment growth in Jones County has exceeded the national rate by a wide margin. Between 1990 and 1995, the latest years in which comparative data is available, total employment in the county grew by over 21%, compared with 7% for the US. Numeric job growth was highest in the services and manufacturing sectors. Health services was the single fastest growing industry.

This impressive job growth has caused significant tightening of the labor market. Employers in all industries have noticed that labor has become less available in recent years. In 1990, the unemployment rate in Jones County was higher than in the nation as a whole (6.4% in Jones County versus 5.6% for the US), but is now significantly lower than the US rate (3% versus 5%).

TABLE 7
COMMUTING PATTERNS OF JONES COUNTY RESIDENTS (1990)
Source: US Bureau of the Census

Workplace County	Jones County Residents
Jones	83.0%
Forrest	5.8%
Jasper	1.8%
Covington	0.8%
Wayne	0.7%
Lamar	0.6%
Perry	0.3%
Jefferson Davis	0.1%
Other	7.0%
Total	100.0%

WDG's survey results show that the basic commuting pattern between the Hattiesburg MSA and Jones County has changed little since 1990. WDG survey results indicate that the average commuting distance reported by employers for their hourly and nonexempt employees in both areas is approximately 15 miles (See Table 8), which equates to approximately a 30 minute commute. Management and professional level employees at Hattiesburg MSA companies typically travel less distance (12 miles), but in Jones County they travel longer distances (19 miles), according to surveyed employers.

LABOR MARKET PROFILE

Summary

The employment profiles of the Hattiesburg MSA and Jones County are very different. Benchmarked against the national average, the Hattiesburg MSA's employment base is more heavily represented in the retail and service sectors and under-represented in the manufacturing; wholesale trade; transportation; and finance, insurance and real estate (FIRE) sectors. Service employment as a percentage of total employment is slightly lower than the US average, and the proportion of retail employment is far higher than the national average. In contrast, Jones County maintains a very high concentration of manufacturing jobs. In Jones County, the concentration of manufacturing employment is over twice that of the Hattiesburg MSA. Employment distribution in wholesale trade, FIRE, and transportation is below national averages. Although recent employment growth trends in the Hattiesburg MSA and Jones County share some similarities, indications are that the near-term employment profiles of the two areas will remain sharply different.

The most important difference in the employment growth trends between the two labor markets occurred in the manufacturing industry. Between 1990 and 1995 (the latest five year period for which reliable data is available), Jones County experienced a very large increase in manufacturing employment, while growth in this sector within the Hattiesburg MSA was negative. Jones County manufacturing employment growth was spread over a diverse set of manufacturing industries (led by food, lumber products and industrial machinery and equipment) while major losses occurred only in the apparel and miscellaneous manufacturing industries sectors. Conversely, several manufacturing industries in the Hattiesburg MSA (apparel, chemicals, and food processing) suffered major employment losses, while only one industry, electronic equipment, added more than 100 jobs between 1990 and 1995. The manufacturing losses in the Hattiesburg MSA were, in large part, the result of downsizings or closings by a few large employers. These losses represent a transition in the MSA's manufacturing employment base. Older, labor intensive industries traditional to the area are giving way to newer, more capital intensive operations requiring a more skilled labor base.

Services posted the largest employment gains of any major industry in the Hattiesburg MSA. In both areas, absolute employment gains were greatest in the health services sector. In fact, health services employment growth in both the Hattiesburg MSA and Jones County was over ten times higher than that of each area's second fastest growing services industry (membership organizations and business services). Virtually all services industries posted employment gains in both areas during this period.

FIRE employment growth in the Hattiesburg MSA grew at a faster rate than in the US as a whole, led by gains in non-depository institutions. Most FIRE industries actually suffered employment losses, with the greatest losses in real estate and depository

institutions. FIRE employment in Jones County declined in all industries except for insurance agents and brokers, which experienced a very slight gain.

If recent employment growth trends continue, both areas will face opportunities and challenges. Currently, employment in the Hattiesburg MSA is diversified. There is evidence that Hattiesburg is attracting high quality production jobs while losing lower wage positions. The ADP should continue its successful efforts to upgrade the quality of its manufacturing base, while attempting to attract the higher order services operations (administrative service centers, back office operations, etc.) which are a natural target for its area. Jones County has been highly successful in attracting manufacturing growth. However, there is a danger that this growth will come at the expense of diversification. Jones County currently maintains a much higher concentration of manufacturing employment than the rest of the US. Efforts should be made to attract quality non-manufacturing operations to diversify the county's economic base.

Findings

The employment profiles of the Hattiesburg MSA and Jones County are significantly different. The major differences in the employment profiles are highlighted below. Refer to Table 9 for details.

- The Hattiesburg MSA maintains a high concentration of retail employment. The concentration of retail industry jobs in the Hattiesburg MSA significantly exceeds state and national norms (MSA 30%, Mississippi 21%, US 21%).
- The concentration of manufacturing employment in Jones County (33%) is more than double that of the Hattiesburg MSA (14%), and exceeds that of Mississippi (29%) and the US (19%).
- The Hattiesburg MSA has a far higher concentration of services employment (33%) than Jones County (23%) and Mississippi (30%).

Table 10 further highlights the differences between the employment profiles of each area. The Hattiesburg MSA has a higher concentration of jobs employing administrative and clerical support and health care personnel than Jones County. In contrast, Jones County has a much higher concentration of workers in most manufacturing occupations (assemblers, craft production, laborers, and machine operators) than the Hattiesburg MSA, Mississippi, and the US.

TABLE 14 MAJOR EMPLOYERS – JONES COUNTY (1997) Source: Economic Development Authority of Jones County

	Company	Approximate Employment	Activity
-	Howard Industries	>2,000	Manufacture transformers
	South Central Regional Medical Center	1,300	Healthcare
Ellisville	Ellisville State School	1,300	Healthcare
Ellisville	Jones County School	1,200	Education
	Wayne Poultry	1,000	Poultry processing
	Masonite	800	Manufacture siding/doors
	Sanderson Farms	700	Poultry processing
	Laurel School District	600	Education
Ellisville ->	Jones County Junior College	400	Education

TABLE 20 EMPLOYMENT GROWTH BY MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY (1990-1995)* Jones County

Source: County Business Patterns

SIC Code	SIC Description	Employment (1990)	Employment (1995)	Absolute Growth	Percentage Growth
2000	Food And Kindred Products	730	1,679	949	130.0%
2400	Lumber And Wood Products	750	1,226	476	63.5%
3500	Industrial Machinery And Equipment	611	743	132	21.6%
3000	Rubber And Miscellaneous Plastics Products	10	60	50	500.0%
2700	Printing And Publishing	103	119	16	15.5%
3700	Transportation Equipment	10	15	5	50.0%
2900	Petroleum And Coal Products	60	60	0	0.0%
3200	Stone, Clay, And Glass Products	60	60	0	0.0%
3600	Electronic And Other Electronic Equipment	1,750	1,750	0	0.0%
3400	Fabricated Metal Products	84	82	-2	-2.4%
3900	Miscellaneous Manufacturing Industries	175	60	-115	-65.7%
2300	Apparel And Other Textile Products	750	175	-575	* -76.7%

*Includes only sectors for which data is available

Services industry employment growth trends differed in each area. Between 1990 and 1995, services employment growth in the Hattiesburg MSA greatly exceeded US norms (47% versus 21% - See Table 18). However, percentage growth in Lamar County was especially high (126%). Services industry employment growth in Jones County was also much higher than the US average during this period (57% versus 21%).

Services employment growth in both labor markets was dominated by the health services industry. Tables 21 and 22 show that in both the Hattiesburg MSA and Jones County, health services had the greatest absolute and percentage employment growth between 1990 and 1995. Every services industry in the Hattiesburg MSA experienced employment growth except for business services, which suffered a very slight decline. Amusement and recreation was the only services industry in Jones County which lost jobs during this time.

TABLE 22 EMPLOYMENT GROWTH BY SERVICES INDUSTRY (1990-1995)*

Jones County
Source: County Business Patterns

SIC Code	SIC Description	Employment (1990)	Employment (1995)	Absolute Growth	Percentage Growth
8000	Health Services	920	2,241	1,321	143.6%
7300	Business Services	250	320	70	28.0%
7200	Personal Services	165	231	66	40.0%
8300	Social Services	168	228	60	35.7%
7000	Hotels And Other Lodging Places	93	151	58	62.4%
7600	Miscellaneous Repair Services	134	183	49	36.6%
8600	Membership Organizations	469	511	42	9.0%
8100	Legal Services	66	83	17	25.8%
8700	Engineering And Management Services	162	171	9	5.6%
7500	Auto Repair, Services, And Parking	164	169	5	3.0%
8200	Educational Services	74	77	3	4.1%
7800	Motion Pictures	60	60	0	0.0%
8400	Museums, Botanical, Zoological Gardens	10	10	0	0.0%
8900	Services, n.e.c.	10	10	0	0.0%
7900	Amusement And Recreation Services	161	108 •	-53	-32.9%

*Includes only sectors for which data is available

TABLE 39 LOCAL COLLEGE ENROLLMENT AND GRADUATES BY INSTITUTION (1998) Source: College Registrar Offices

Institution	City	Total Enrollment	Part- Time	Full-Time	Under- graduate Degrees	Graduate Degrees
Jones County Junior College	Ellisville	4,185	937	3,248	n/a	n/a
Southeastern Baptist College	Laurel	159	124	35	8	n/a
University Of Southern Mississippi	Hattiesburg	12,954	2,243	10,711	2,176	1,083
William Carey College	Hattiesburg	1,199	n/a	n/a	246	151
Pearl River Community College-Forrest Campus	Hattiesburg	482	211	271	n/a	n/a

At the present time, the local post-secondary educational infrastructure is meeting the training needs of employers. Tables 40 and 41 list degree programs offered by local post-secondary institutions that develop skills directly transferable to manufacturing and clerical occupations. Few interviewed employers report a need for private training consultants to provide their employees with instruction unavailable locally. However, as the economies of the Hattiesburg MSA and Jones County continue to grow in size and complexity, there is a possibility that the offerings of local post-secondary institutions will become less relevant to employers. It is important that the ADP and the EDA of Jones County continually assess the relevance of training to the evolving needs of employers.

The availability of plastics related instruction is a major asset for the study area. Both Jones County Junior College and the University of Southern Mississippi offer programs directly applicable to the plastics industry. WDG's research shows that relatively few post-secondary institutions in the US offer plastics related programs. In areas that offer these programs, local plastics manufacturers find them extremely valuable for producing skilled graduates and as sources for continuing education. In addition to the programs available at the post-secondary level, Petal High School is one of the few high schools in the nation that offers vocational training in polymer science. All of these programs are major advantages for attracting plastics manufacturing operations.

Findings

Labor costs in Forrest, Lamar, and Jones Counties are much lower than the national average. Total per employee annual earnings in all three counties are at least 20% lower than the US average (See Table 51), although variations occur among the business sectors. Manufacturing earnings in all three counties are at least 25% lower than the national average, while average employee earnings in the services sector are closer to the national average. Annual earnings in the FIRE sector in all three counties of the study area are far below the national average.

TABLE 51
AVERAGE ANNUAL PER EMPLOYEE EARNINGS BY MAJOR INDUSTRY (1995)
Source: County Business Patterns

•	Forrest County	Lamar County	Hattiesburg MSA	Jones County	Mississippi	US
Agricultural Services, Forestry, And Fishing	\$12,706	\$6,000	\$11,992	\$12,019	\$15,639	\$19,200
Mining	\$17,981	\$6,167	\$14,729	\$32,006	\$27,890	\$40,953
Construction	\$20,673	\$13,497	\$19,576	\$26,675	\$22,000	\$29,228
Manufacturing	\$24,518	\$19,212	\$23,684	\$23,457	\$22,517	\$33,902
Transportation And Public Utilities	\$29,809	\$26,222	\$28,862	\$26,670	\$28,890	\$33,908
Wholesale Trade	\$22,604	\$19,283	\$22,346	\$22,329	\$25,171	\$34,361
Retail Trade	\$11,802	\$12,018	\$11,822	\$12,204	\$12,106	\$14,230
FIRE	\$22,978	\$25,644	\$23,155	\$22,948	\$25,181	\$36,604
Services	\$21,716	\$15,049	\$21,236	\$18,586	\$19,175	\$24,904
Unclassified Establishments	\$8,980	\$17,600	\$9,778	\$15,143	\$15,155	\$18,146
Total	\$19,438	\$16,857	\$19,166	\$20,170	\$19,937	\$26,575